monument portably built around 1850.

Note for Emily from FJA - 1964:

I have a very long write-up done by my grandfather Aldrich in the late 1890's, titled THINGS I REMEMBER - telling all sorts of every-day happenings from the time he was born near the base of Wigwam Hill until he was a young man living down in the Center. He speaks of Thomson Taft as follows:

"He was a farmer and a mechanic - all the Taft race had a genius for mechanics. He had one son, who was a carpenter; and together they built the only real public monument the town of Mendon ever had.* It stood on the highest peak of Wigwam Hill and was the wonder of all the country around. It was a large square structure, with several stories one above the other, and in viewing from its highest eminence, and with a spy glass, a very large range of country in all directions could be seen.

* about 1850

"Thomson Taft, Sr. (his son was named Thomson) was a large powerful man and had his own peculiar ways, and when coming in contact with others of different ways there was apt to be some exhibition of dissent on the part of "uncle Thomp" as he was sometimes called. As said before, the Wigwam Hill monument was considerable of a wonder and people from miles around were in the habit of going there; Sunday school picnics were held there, and for a time it was a place of general resort; and I remember there was a great deal of talk about the way Uncle Thomp would get after the boys when they overstepped his idea of correctness. In the wintertime dances were often held in this monumental structure and, according to reports, a good many good times were often had there, but when Uncle Thomp was around everybody was expected to toe the mark or hear a forceful reprimand, in his loud drawn-out speech, from him. At one of these dances a set of ruffs put in an appearance and, supposing that in so out-of-the-way place as that was, they would be licensed to cut a few dashes, they soon began to make their presence known by direful disturbances, never dreaming that the constabulary forces of that section would be adequate to their strength; but Uncle Thomp was on duty and the wily sports were forced to call on the peaceful members of the company to protect them from their raging foe, and when Uncle Thomp was being held back from the unruly sports by his friends, he cried out "let me alone, let me alone, I want to kill them." The old monument, however, became a back number and was finally taken down and the lumber put into another building.

"The name of Uncle Thompson's wife was Joan and far and near she was known by the familiar name of Aunt Joan. She was a strong-minded woman and, like her husband, had her own peculiar ways. She took the Boston Weekly Post and was a dyed-in-the-wool Democrat. She was a cleanly housekeeper but did everything in a strictly old-fashioned way. I remember of being in her house a great many times and vividly recollect her form and figure; and how it looked in her living room. There was a large old-fashioned fireplace, that in winter was always cheerful; a hardwood table, flag-bottom chairs, and a very large old-fashioned high-backed settle. On one end of this most cosy old settle, in the wintertime, there was pretty sure to be a small-handled basket full of some eatable variety of apples, which were free to all, and, as I recall it, my preferred seat in Aunt Joan's house was on this old red-painted settle. Carpets were not in favor with Aunt Joan for she had been brought up to sanded floors, but the floors she did have were a sight to behold. For most of the time her floor was covered with the cleanest and whitest of sand; but when occasion required, the broom and the scrubbing utensils were brought into play and the result was a spit-span white clean floor that was in readiness for the elite of the neighborhood to walk on."

notes from Marcus M. Aldrich, grandfather of Florence J. Aldrich